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ABSTRACT

This paper describes Secretary Gorbachev's efforts to reform education by introducing experimentation and freedom of expression through "glasnost." A brief educational history demonstrates the lingering effect of the "continuity phenomenon" that has plagued attempts at liberal educational reform. Essentially, the continuity phenomenon includes but is not limited to such enduring educational practices as formal examinations, formal teaching methods, a uniform curriculum stressing basic skills, standardized textbooks, school uniforms, recognition medals for academic achievement, and strict school discipline, all of which are framed by the economic and political considerations of the state. It concludes by indicating that Gorbachev's efforts at reform will meet continued resistance by Soviet educators who are firmly entrenched in the traditional ideologies, policies, and procedures associated with the continuity phenomenon. (JAM)

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CONTINUITY IN SOVIET EDUCATION -- ANOTHER GORBACHEV HURDLE

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Worldwide media are rife daily with events and happenings taking place in the USSR under Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of "glasnost" (public openness) and "perestroika" (socialist restructuring). While these policies aim specifically at upgrading the Soviet economy, they must of necessity impact on the country's educational policy and development if change is to be sustained and honed to meet economic and technological needs. General Secretary Gorbachev depicts perestroika as the next stage in socialist history requiring the delegation of more responsibility to the Soviet people -- and euphorically projects that "amazing things happen when people take responsibility for everything themselves."[1] But such responsibility cannot continue "to be done in the old way, without acceleration, that is, without going into higher gear."[2] His charge to education, to Soviet schooling, is unmistakable and implorable:

> Perestroika calls for competence and high professionalism. We cannot do without up-to-date and all-round training, without thorough knowledge in the fields of production, science and technology, management, economics, in the organization of work and work incentives, sociology and psychology. In short, we have to bring as much of the nation's intellectual potential as possible into play and substantially increase its creative efficiency.[3]

Interestingly enough, two earlier liberal periods in Soviet history appear to have prefigured the so-called "democratizing" parameters and conditions marking Soviet society today and their imperative for commensurate liberal and broad educational reform, namely:

1) the New Economic Policy (NEP) of state capitalism and industrialization (1921-1927);

2) the Khrushchev period of de-Stalinization of Soviet society and the linking of the Soviet school with society and life (1956-1964).

Whereas educational reform endeavors in both periods succumbed to the

[1] Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Perestroika (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 97.
[2] Ibid., p. 124.
[3] Ibid.

phenomenon of "continuity" with past educational policies and practices (through a mixture of socio-educational inertia and reassertion of authoritarian means of control), this paper will address the prospect of such lightning striking thrice ("troika lightning"!), thus, jeopardizing Gorbachev's commitment to the "new revolution."

Documentation of the fall of educational reform to the "continuity phenomenon" during the NEP and Khrushchev periods exists,[4] but the tendency to liken Gorbachev's era of perestroika with pivotal social and economic considerations during these previous eras requires some amplification.

Origins of the "Continuity Phenomenon" -- the NEP (1921-1927)

Lenin's New Economic Policy, known also as the period of state capitalism, ran from 1921-1927. It recognized the dilemmas posed by a premature socialist revolution within the industrially and economically underdeveloped Soviet society. It conceded the need to pursue an accelerated phase of industrialized capitalism, thereby reversing the capitalist-socialist cycles of orthodox Marxism, averting economic collapse, coming to be known as the doctrine of Leninism. In reality this compromise allowed for such petty-bourgeois practices as limited private enterprise in agriculture, light industry, and private trade, ownership, and retail sales while large-scale industry, public utilities, the financial banking system, foreign trade, major natural resources, and transportation were maintained under state ownership and control, which enterprises sought to expand by earning profits. Once peasants were granted the right to sell their goods on the free market at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, fixed quotas gave way to a graduated tax, key branches of the economy came to be based

[4] For documentation of the "continuity phenomenon," for example, see:
[for NEP] -- Harvey R. Jahn, "The Development of Soviet Educational Policy During 1917-1936," PhD Dissertation, The University of Michigan, 1968, especially Chapters 4 & 5.
[for Khrushchev period] -- Hedrick Smith, The Russians (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), especially pp. 664-668.

on the principle of personal and material incentives -- with wages and salaries set to reflect effort and responsibility, and the imposed and excessive centralization of a planned state economy was subordinated to a cooperative system.[5] Liberalization during the NEP in economics was matched in the social and cultural domains, but not in the political domain. Cultural and social freedom, relaxation, and liberalism were obviously reflected in education. This period of cultural renaissance and relative intellectual freedom, sometimes referred to as the "Silver Age of Russian Culture,"[6] resulted in the adoption of various educational theories from the West. The Dalton Plan schooling, John Dewey's method of projects, the "complex system" of teaching (the study of interdisciplinary topic-oriented themes rather than academic disciplines), and the laboratory method (emphasizing the use of study rooms or laboratories instead of the traditional lesson system in classrooms) collectively comprised non-traditional methods aimed at linking the school with life and designed to correct the glaring defect of traditional subject-lesson approaches -- ignoring the individuality of the student.[7] Known educationally as the "era of experimentation,"[8] educational practices during the NEP were affected by decrees promulgated as early as 1918 abolishing examinations and homework and elevating the study of labor over traditional formal schooling.[9] The experimental education of the NEP ceased with the

[5] Wolfgang Leonhard, "The Bolshevik Revolution Turns 70," Foreign Affairs, Winter, 1987/88, p. 390.

[6] Joseph I. Zajda, Education in the USSR (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 11.

[7] Jahn, op. cit., pp. 268-269. For additional insights into non-traditional approaches, see:

F.F. Korolev, T.D. Korneichik, and Z.I. Ravkin, Ocherki po istorii sovetskoi shkoly i pedagogiki 1921-1931 [Essays on the History of the Soviet School and Pedagogy, 1921-1931] (Moscow: Izd. Akademii Pedagogicheskikh Nauk RSFSR, 1961); and N.N. Nikitin, "Prepodavanie matematiki v sovetskoi shkole 1917-1947 gg." ["Teaching Mathematics in the Soviet School, 1917-1947"], Matematika v shkole [Mathematics in the School], No. 5 (Sept.-Oct., 1947), 4-22.

[8] Zajda, op. cit., p. 20.

[9] M. P. Kashina and E.M. Chekharina, Narodnoe obrazovanie v RSFSR [Public Education in the RSFSR] (Moscow: Izd. "Prosveshchenie," 1970), pp. 242-244.

beginning of Stalin's "revolution from above" in 1927 with the triumph of his economic preference for teleological/deliberate planning for accelerated industrialization in the form of the First Five-Year Plan (1928) over gradual growth in economic development. By 1934 education and all other sectors of Soviet society and the economy had been reshaped along traditional lines. By then continuity with the pre-Soviet system of education had been re-established with the reintroduction of numerous tsarist traditional practices. Such practices included: formal examinations; formal teaching methods (prescribed by the People's Commissariat of Education -- Narkompros); both a uniform and compulsory primary/secondary curriculum stressing basic skills; standardized textbooks for core subject matter; school uniforms; recognition medals for high performance on examinations; and strict school discipline along with communist character training. Experimentation and freedom in all aspects of Soviet life succumbed to the Stalin cult of personality -- until Nikita S. Khrushchev's educational reforms of 1958, following his denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956, only three years after his death.

Khrushchev's De-Stalinization Period -- and the Return of the "Continuity Phenomenon" (1956-1964)

Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin appealed to wide circles of the intelligentsia, even provoking protest literature that bypassed Stalin to criticism of the system itself.[10] While the image and prestige of Khrushchev as a liberalizer were tarnished by the bloody Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising late in 1956, he surmounted the crisis, especially with the launching of the first space satellite, Sputnik I, in October of 1957. Having catapulted onto the stage of unprecedented world prestige in technology, the economic spectre again forced the Soviet

[10] "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics -- the U.S.S.R. since 1936," The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed. (1988), XXVIII, 1012.

hand, as promises by the post-Stalin leadership to raise living standards were unfulfilled to the continuing dismay of the Soviet people. Such pressure for a more consumer-oriented economy was often matched by that of intellectuals calling for expanded rights and freedoms, especially that of expression of their ideas. Khrushchev struck an uneasy detente with the intellectuals and placated the masses with some concessions but many empty promises for a consumer economy. Detente with the West afforded a means of lessening the domestic strain by diverting investment from defense/heavy industry to light industry/agriculture to the dismay, however, of others in the leadership. Meanwhile, efforts toward liberal reform and "thaws" (intellectual, cold-war, political prisoner releases, etc.) increased the ire and alienation of the entrenched Soviet bureaucracy.

As if such liberalizing tendencies had not already incurred signiicant political opposition, Khrushchev's Education Theses during de-Stalinization, highlighted by his relentless support of the 1958 decree "On Strengthening the Ties of the School With Life,"[11] helped to seal his fate. Obsessed with Stalin's discarding of polytechnical education in the late-1920s in favor of a return to traditional tsarist educational practices emphasizing a highly structured academic education by means of old and formal methods, Khrushchev openly ridiculed the separation of the school from life as epitomized by students' disregard for physical work and their lack of preparation for a practical life. The change in the almost thirty-year-old tripartite structure of the Ten-Year General-Educational Labor-Polytechnical School from 4-3-3 to 4-4-3 with the addition of an eleventh year of school and the combining of work training with

[11] Tezisy TsK KPSS i Soveta Ministrov SSSR, Ob ukreplenii sviazi shkoly s zhizni'iv i o dal'neishem razvitii sistemy narodnogo obrazovaniia v strane [On Strengthening the Ties of the School With Life and the Further Development of the System of Public Education in the Country] (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1958).

industrial experience for all students so as to impart polytechnical education were not well received. The polytechnical education revived was not necessarily that envisioned by Lenin and Krupskaia, since it consisted mainly in equipping secondary school students "for specialized vocational work in industry or agriculture."[12] Unpopular with factory managers, educationalists, teachers, parents, students, and particularly the bourgeois elements of society, it attested as to how "the egalitarian fusion of study and work,"[13] a basic Marxist tenet, had fallen out of favor in a society that supposedly sought to be classless.

The 1958 restructuring of the Soviet education system reflected Khrushchev's resentment over the extent to which society -- parents and their children -- had drifted from Leninist ideology and values, such as the role of the school in promoting manual labor, socially useful labor, and the primacy of the Party as the means by which the people could best serve the Soviet state. Stalin's emphasis on output, best guaranteed by a traditional academic education, had softened Soviet youth, shielded them from practical understandings of industrial and agricultural production, and weakened socialist construction. Khrushchev's educational philosophy, as packaged in the prescriptions strengthening the linkage of the school to life itself, sought more to change the moral and political attitudes of youth than to elevate economic development and production. His concerns were not riveted just to the here and now, but spanned long-range to include a campaign for achievement of the ideal of collective education from early childhood in the form of boarding schools [shkoly internaty]. This new type of superstructure extended the newly organized system of

[12] "History of Education -- Revolutionary patterns of education," The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed. (1988), XVIII, 80.

[13] Zajda, op. cit., p. 33.

pre-school nurseries and kindergartens [yasli and detskii sadi] and would put the state in the communal child-rearing business to neutralize negative family contaminants, such as personal careerism, one-sided attention to intellectual development, and status consciousness [privilegentsia].

The totality of Khrushchev's multi-faceted pursuits and the adaptation of his convictions to problems perceived, while establishing precedents for selective liberalizing of the Soviet regime, led to his overthrow by the Party leadership in October 1964. Revision of the 1958 school reforms adopted under Khrushchev again reflected the yin and yang of Leninism -- continuity with the traditional past and moderate reform. The swing back to the right over the next two years under the new leadership of Leonid Brezhnev combined both the dismantling and realignment of Soviet education -- the most significant chages in which were as follows:

1) With the abolition of Grade 11 the 10-year program returned as the basis of general education;[14]
2) Lowering the upper secondary level of schooling from three to two years while generally eliminating vocational training from Grades 9 and 10 (except in a few better equipped secondary schools) signaled the return to a firm knowledge of basic academic subjects;
3) Following the creation of a 500-member committee by the USSR Academy of Sciences and the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in 1964,[15] new syllabi for a new curriculum were drawn up emphasizing academic, political, and moral training;
4) In 1966 the USSR Ministry of Education was established to coordinate and to oversee the return to the more academic orientation of Soviet schooling;
5) The shortening of primary schooling in 1970 from four to three years (thereby moving from a 4-4-2 to a 3-5-2 tripartite structure) allowed for an additional year of subject matter specialization at the secondary level and heightened expectations of primary students.

[14] It is informative to compare the 4-4-2 tripartite structure of the revision with that of 4-4-3 in 1958-1964 and that of 4-3-3 prior to 1958 -- noting the retention of the compulsory eight years of schooling begun under Khrushchev.

[15] Zajda, op. cit., p. 34.

Gorbachev's "New Revolution" -- Immune to the Old "Continuity Phenomenon"?

The natures of the changes wrought by the NEP (1921-1927) and Khrushchev's de-Stalinization efforts (1956-1964) were not to be nurtured to permanence. Continuity with past policy and practice, particularly in the educational realm, ultimately prevailed. Will Gorbachev's "new revolution" finally succeed in shedding the mantles of tradition and inertia (with all their interdisciplinary repercussions) to achieve the genuine change positioned at the top of the greased flagpole eminently flying the banners of perestroika and glasnost? That is, can the flagpole with these banners fully unfurled, as the proverbial lightning rod, thwart lightning from striking thrice and allow for and preserve the changes Gorbachev seeks? The analysis that follows will attempt to weigh the prospect of immunity to the traditional nemesis of Soviet educational reform, the "continuity phenomenon," as Gorbachev's perestroika campaign seeks the "new revolution."

Requisite to an understanding of Gorbachev's self-proclaimed "new revolution" is knowledge both of "perestroika" and "glasnost" and their symbiotic relationship. Perestroika seeks the restructuring or rebuilding of Party, society, and economy. But the term as employed today cannot stand alone. In tandem with it Gorbachev urges the need for glasnost, which, while generally translated by media in the West as "openness," actually means "to make public or known." It has been described by The New York Times as "Gorbachev's policy of making information more readily available to persons needed to implement the system of economic reforms,"[16] which began to take effect on January 1st of this year.

[16] Daniel Howes, "Glasnost: Don't Expect Too Much," Roanoke Times & World-News, November 29, 1987, p. F3.

The symbiotic relationship between "perestroika" and "glasnost" is crucial to Gorbachev's program of reform. Employing the analogy of the carrot and the stick, glasnost assumes the role of the carrot[17] so as to compensate for the stick felt by Soviet people should perestroika take hold with its realistic overtures to inflation and unemployment, officially unknowns in Soviet society. Glasnost cannot be equated with Western-style democracy, but it does connote the regime's desire to foster change, to embellish the Soviet sense of pride at home and its image abroad, and to portray a newly acquired regard for flexibility and reasonableness. Glasnost is a positive which is not only a means to achieve perestroika, but also, to help cushion the initially negative impact of economic changes occasioned by successful restructuring. The reason for its tight symbiotic relationship with perestroika is to expose and to publicize the corruption rampant in a system long recognized to be a sinecure for millions of faceless bureaucrats. If the system is to be restructured and made more productive and efficient, then these parasites will have to be targeted by public candor. As Marshall Goldman of Harvard's Russian Research Center observes, up to now there was no way to "blow the whistle" on these life-tenured power barons, which explains why Gorbachev introduced glasnost.[18]

Even more important, however, stands the rationale for Gorbachev's introduction of perestroika. Gorbachev feels strongly that during Leonid Brezhnev's rule (1964-1982) Soviet socialism had turned stagnant from instituting certain procedures and processes that reflected a type of re-Stalinization following the Khrushchev era. Such inertia was viewed as

[17] Ibid.

[18] Marshall Goldman, "Can Anybody Fix the Soviet System?," U.S. News & World Report, February 9, 1987, pp. 38-39.

particularly alarming in an age marked by high technology and global competition. Socialism in the USSR was headed for catastrophe from what has been characterized as "the phlegmatic introduction of scientific and technological breakthroughs, and the unsatisfactory quality of output."[19] Support from the intelligentsia was imperative if the gaps in technology and, in turn, in the economy were to be bridged. The fact that the widening technological gap between the USSR and the West was indisputable, except perhaps in the field of military technology, was symptomatic of a dysfunctional economic system. There is a difference between being an economic and industrial superpower and merely a military superpower -- the difference amounting to the prospect of remaining a superpower over the long term.

The key to understanding the need for perestroika as it relates to the economy is the distinction in principle between providing social benefits under communism and under socialism. Gorbachev poignantly addresses this distinction:

> ... socialism has nothing to do with equalizing. Socialism cannot ensure conditions of life and consumption in accordance with the [Marx's] principle, 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.' This will be under communism. Socialism has a different criterion for distributing social benefits: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.'[20]

The Soviet Union is not a communistic state. It is a socialistic state. On this economic distinction all restructuring of its economic system hinges. Under perestroika, the objective is not to scrap the basic principle of socialism, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work," but rather, to apply it more consistently.[21] In so doing,

[19] Georgi Smirnov, "Perestroika: the revolution continues," Soviet Life, November, 1987, p. 24.
[20] Gorbachev, op. cit., p. 100.
[21] Smirnov, op. cit., p. 25.

Gorbachev's new economic reforms propose to ease some of the strict constraints posed by bureaucratic centralism in the past and become more decentralized, thereby reducing control at the center by the state. With a notable increase in local autonomy would come the requirement for more local management, initiative, and decision-making, on the relative merits and efficiency of which would depend the enterprise profits and workers' pay "to each according to his work."

The Law on the State Enterprise requiring the move toward local autonomy went into effect on January 1, 1988. The specific concept on which it is predicated, "self-support" [khozraschet], must be considered the essence of Gorbachev's economic reforms. It is the condition of operating without state financing or backing.[22] Its effect on Soviet managers and workers, who are the products of the traditional system of centralized control and state subsidies, could spell immoderate anxiety, confusion, and fear. Until now, economic reform has consisted almost entirely of rhetoric rather than action. Since "khozraschet" places Soviet factories closest to a capitalist basis since the NEP, ills formerly associated only with Western-style economics can no longer be dismissed. The Washington Post describes "khozraschet" as a concept that:

> ... has no equivalent in the West. It means that enterprises are on their own -- linked to the national economy by plan guidelines, but given autonomy to settle their own bills, keep their profits and, to some extent, find their own customers and suppliers.[23]

Assuming that the reforms are successful, it is indisputable that the

[22] Bob Willis, "Russian word for 1988 is: khozraschet," Roanoke Times & World-News, December 1, 1988, p. A7.
Khozraschet was effected at plants producing 60% of the industrial goods manufactured in the Soviet Union, following its experimentation over the previous year in a limited number of factories. Prices of what factories buy and sell will remain under strict government control until 1990, while Gorbachev's prices are slated to take full effect in 1991.

[23] Ibid.

demands of autonomy, flexibility, and capitalistic-type risks will cause the Soviet system to become more democratic. As such, perestroika will require breaking with conservative ways of thinking.[24] It is no mere coincidence that the subtitle of Gorbachev's bestseller is "New Thinking For Our Country and the World."[25] Gorbachev's expectation of workers and consumers is a combination of hard work and creativity for which he has pledged future material rewards.[26] With emphasis on creativity and reliance on more democratic approaches to revive the Soviet economy come risks -- risks emanating from the deliberate diminution of state control.

Gorbachev sees his program of perestroika as a continuation of Lenin's push for flexible rule by the Party known as "democratic centralism," according to which the Party functioned until Lenin's death in January 1924.[27] By the time Stalin introduced the First Five-Year Plan in 1928, "democratic centralism" had devolved into rigid "bureaucratic centralism," which survived pretty much intact right until Gorbachev's assumption of leadership. That Gorbachev desires to reverse this trend there can be no doubt, as conveyed in Perestroika:

> ... it is essential to change over from predominantly administrative to predominantly economic methods of management at every level, to broad democratization in administration and to activating the human factor in every way.[28]

[24] Smirnov, loc. cit.

[25] Gorbachev, op. cit., p. 3.

[26] Gertrude E. Schroeder, "The Soviet Economy Under Gorbachev," Current History, October, 1987, p. 345.

[27] To wit: Gorbachev concluded his report on June 25, 1987, at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU:

> The restructuring drive under way across the land is directly continuing the cause of the October 1917 Revolution and consistently projecting the ideals inscribed on the banner of our revolution....
> M.S. Gorbachev, "On the Party's Tasks in Fundamentally Restructuring the Management of the Economy," Soviet Life, Supplement, September, 1987, p. III.

[28] Gorbachev, Ibid., p. II.

And, as quoted from his book in another source:

> In politics and ideology we are seeking to revive the living spirit of Leninism. Many decades of being mesmerized by dogma, by a rule-book approach, have had their effect. Today we want to inject a genuinely creative spirit into our theoretical work.[29]

While risks accrue from Gorbachev's reinstatement of Lenin's "democratic centralism" with its implications for lessened state control and new self-management, an even greater risk appears to stem from his heavy reliance on the intelligentsia.[30] As was accepted by Lenin during the NEP, rapid change depends on the cooperation of a well educated and well trained intellectual elite. Early in his pursuit of perestroika Gorbachev recognized the potential of a more relaxed working relationship with the intelligentsia:

> I recall a meeting in June 1986 with the personnel of the apparatus of the CPSU Central Committee. It concerned perestroika. I had to ask them to adopt a new style of working with the intelligentsia. It is time to stop ordering it about, since this is harmful and inadmissible. The intelligentsia has wholeheartedly welcomed the program for the democratic renewal of society.[31]

The importance ascribed to the intelligentsia and to the new phenomenon of democratization by Gorbachev surfaces in recalling heated debates that took place at congresses of creative unions, voluntary societies of intellectuals, while promoting his program of perestroika:

> Democratization is taking place everywhere, acquiring acute forms at times. Someone objected, claiming that it would be difficult to work in an environment where each individual is his own philosopher, his own foremost authority, and believes that only he is right. I replied that it is far worse to be dealing with a passive intelligentsia, and with indifference, and

[29] M.S. Gorbachev, "In His Words," U.S. News & World Report, November 9, 1987, p. 74.

[30] According to Alexander Yakovlev, Gorbachev's close associate and recent appointee to the Politburo, "intelligentsia" means "intelligent people, the advanced, thinking people of society. M.B. Zuckerman, "Letter From Moscow," U.S. News & World Report, November 16, 1987, p. 52.

[31] Gorbachev, op. cit., p. 81.

> cynicism .... The worst thing that can happen is if, in these revolutionary times, the creative intelligentsia allows itself to get bogged down in trifles, if it gives vent to personal ambitions and expends its energies on senseless high words rather than creative endeavor.[32]

While he has sought and won support from the intelligentsia by allowing the publication and release of materials previously censored, the November 1987 firing of Moscow Party chief, Boris Yeltsin, for his criticism that the reform was progressing too slowly,[33] dampened the spirits of many intellectuals, despite attempts to placate them with Yeltsin's appointment to another important, though less prestigious, job. Trust and confidence gainfully and deliberately cultivated suddenly gave way to cynicism and fear that the regime had not really changed.

The symbolic nature of this case has critical implications for the success of perestroika. Gorbachev's public campaigns to promote his program of reform, especially his book Perestroika, testify to his recognition that the bureaucracy is damning to the human spirit. In its wake come such socially and economically corrosive behaviors as corruption, nepotism, black marketeering, alcoholism, and absenteeism. Gorbachev's perestroika program comprises more than just a tangible dimension calling for quantitative and qualitative gains in industrial, agricultural, and technological output. Similar to Khrushchev's efforts to foment expeditious change, it comprises an intangible non-quantifiable dimension. It stands as the sine qua non of successful reform -- namely, the need for each Soviet citizen to undergo what Gorbachev describes as a "personal perestroika," a fundamental change in the national mood and its psychology,

[32] Ibid., p. 82.
[33] Russell Watson, et al, "Gorbachev's Disillusioned Intellectuals," Newsweek, November 30, 1987, p. 37.

the roots of which reach deeply into its tsarist past.[34] Such a dimension obviates a commitment to a national attitudinal change the immensity of which is analogous perhaps to the challenge set before U.S. citizens by the 1954-1955 Brown decisions. Should such a change in the Soviet national attitude come about, perhaps even exceeding Gorbachev's hopes, does the nurturing of such change possibly portend the encouragement of excessive freedom and problems stemming therefrom in a society unaccustomed to self-direction? A.N. Yakovlev, Gorbachev's closest associate in the Politburo, recently gave a realistic appraisal of the need for a "spiritual dimension" [dukhovnost] of perestroika if it is to take hold:

> The conservatism of inertia, the conservatism of tranquillity, habit and self-satisfaction is extremely strong in our country. Ask these people: Are you against restructuring? They vote for it with both hands. But when it comes to getting down to business, the old stereotypes of thinking and working come into play.[35]

"Dukhovnost," the spiritual dimension of perestroika, becomes both a question of morality and a "fundamental question of restructuring."[36] Should it become pervasive, the basis for the national mood of which Gorbachev speaks, again, could its overall effect lead to excessive freedom and ultimately to chaotic loss of control by the state -- an aberration from centuries of historical precedent? Hard-liners and Party conservatives do not dismiss such a possibility lightly. For example, with decentralization of decision-making may come the encouragement of the separatist tendencies and autonomous thinking on the parts of the growing non-Russian minorities.[37] Gorbachev has a quandary: how to decentralize economic power through increased local

[34] William J. Eaton and Don Fisher, "Remodeling the Revolution," Roanoke Times & World-News, November 29, 1987, p. F-9.

[35] "Work, Think, Be Responsible," Pravda and Izvestiia (December 3 and 4, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP), 39, no. 48, 4&20

[36] Ibid.

[37] Stewart Powell, et al, "Can Moscow Control Restive Minorities?," U.S. News & World Report, February 2, 1987, p. 42.

autonomy while providing adequate freedom for creativity and innovation without jeopardizing the traditional monopoly of power by the Communist Party and its ruling elite.[38] As one Russian historian so appropriately analogized: "The question for the reforming Russian rulers is how to build a fire that will not produce a flame."[39]

The technological gap between the USSR and other economic superpowers places it in a most precarious competitive position: as knowledge literally explodes, the flow of information is constricted without adequate information storage and retrieval systems and incentives to feed human creativity, productivity, and innovation. Free flow of information, the core of technological progress, is anathema to a closed society. Gorbachev anticipates support in consolidating his reforms from the All-Union Communist Party conference to be held in June 1988, whose 5,000 delegates will be elected from nineteen million Party members by secret ballot, thereby lending further credibility to the process of democratization.[40]

Despite free health care, free education, job security, and state subsidies that keep the cost of housing, transportation, day care, and some foods artificially low, life is not easy in the Soviet Union. Consumer goods continue to remain scarce (unlike the long lines to procure them), while personal freedoms (speech, movement, writing, etc.), though slightly improved under glasnost and the mobilization for perestroika, remain rather limited. Now add to these considerations the possible new hardships created by the Law on State Enterprise, put into effect in January 1988, which include: the displacement of millions of workers by the

[38] Henry Trewhitt, "The Risks of a New Revolution," U.S. News & World Report, October 19, 1987, p. 32.

[39] Mortimer B. Zuckerman, "Should the West Help Gorbachev?," U.S. News & World Report, October 19, 1987, p. 57.

[40] Merrill Mc Loughlin, et al, "Gorbachev's Challenge," U.S. News & World Report, October 19, 1987, p. 38.

year 2000, creating heretofore unknown unemployment; lower pay for low work production in place of "wage leveling"; and inflation accompanying the rise and satisfaction of consumer demand. What's the result? Immediate prospects for "the good life" are daunting, not to mention the carrying of such mental baggage as the proverbial cache of unfulfilled promises and the ennui created by the traditional state expectation of indefinite personal sacrifice. Given the blend of these rather unattractive present realities and economic portents, perestroika's chances of acceptance either in tangible form or in spirit [dukhovnost] appear less than secured.

It is too early yet to tell about such acceptance, since the new economic principles have just been put into effect, and only partially at that, with the beginning of the "second stage" of the reform process on January 1, 1988. The Gorbachev reforms thus far for the average Soviet citizen have consisted mostly of rhetoric, the usual slogans to which they have become inured, and a few new "catchwords." The Soviet people yearn for real changes, deeds that back up spoken words, and reasons to be less cynical. Positions staked out by liberals and conservatives will continue to grow in intensity as the reality of perestroika sets in. Such public dialogue can only fuel the peoples' ambivalence or reticence toward perestroika. Gorbachev only recently had to caution some newspaper editors about pushing the limits of glasnost or openness in publicizing the debates on the reform process.[41] Obviously, censorship is not dead -- even under glasnost!

In years past the so-called "unanimity complex"[42] prevailed in regard to any reform of Soviet society. Today the principle of glasnost emphasizes the benefits of "candid stocktaking of sentiments"[43] through

[41] Celestine Bohlen, "Gorbachev Acknowledges Resistance to His Programs for Reform," Washington Post, as reported in the Roanoke Times & World-News, January 13, 1988, p. A4.

[42] V. Chichkanov, "Without a Shadow of False Idealization," Izvestiia (September 4, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP), 39, no. 36: 7.

[43] Ibid.

the use of surveys to study public opinion. One such survey posed the question, "Which demands of restructuring, in your view, do people have the most difficulty in mastering?" -- the preponderant response to which was "to master the central slogan of restructuring - 'start with yourself.'"[44] Another key survey found that:

> ... even among people professionally engaged in ideological work ... more than 75% were unable to adequately translate restructuring's programmatic requirements into the language of concrete practical actions -- that is, to formulate those requirements as applied to their own work, to their 'workplaces.'[45]

The result is that "the understandable desire of economic managers for autonomy is frequently accompanied by a truncated understanding of economic freedom."[46] One would have to agree with the assessment that this situation is disturbing, even alarming. It shows that workers and professionals combined have little idea as to how to convert the principles of perestroika into practice at their enterprises. In actuality, the effect is that the Soviets "are acutely lacking in an ability to comprehend the essence of the planned reforms and to transmit that essence to the masses."[47] This situation is reminiscent of long-standing Soviet difficulties that have plagued the achievement of genuinely polytechnical education in their schools, which not uncommonly has taken on a vocational bias. Failure to understand the principles underlying the restructuring of the Soviet economy and how to convert them into practice could sound the dirge of perestroika. Conversely, clarification of how to apply the principles of perestroika and the efficient dissemination of same could

[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

provide the needed impetus for more probable success.

Since Gorbachev sees his program as a continuation of the gains begun in the NEP, Lenin's familiar question of "What Is To Be Done?" might appropriately be asked regarding today's "new revolution." In his book of the same title, written in 1902, Lenin propagated the innovative theory of the Party as the so-called "vanguard of the proletariat." True to Lenin's ideal here, Gorbachev portrays the current perestroika as a "revolution from above," started and led by the Party.[48] As indicated at the outset of this paper, he, as leader of the Communist Party, in turn viewed education to be important for improving Soviet society via perestroika. This allegedly significant role assigned to education/the Soviet school, however, today appears to have been diminished. Yegor K. Ligachev, the second-ranking member of the Politburo and proclaimed by the Soviet media to be the leader of the Kremlin's conservatives, claims that "the situation in the schools is at variance with the process of the democratization of all life."[49]

Ligachev's opinions join with the consensus supporting the need for perestroika, but his emphases pursuant to perestroika differ from those of Gorbachev.[50] In charge of ideology within the ruling Politburo, Ligachev attaches extreme importance to school reform "as an inalienable part of the entire program of the renewal of Soviet society."[51] Gorbachev's own solution to the evils of Soviet society begin and end with the economy.[52]

[48] Gorbachev, op. cit., p. 55.
[49] "Switch to Concrete Deeds," Izvestiia (August 28, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDPS) 39, no. 34: 14.
[50] Lars T. Lih, "Gorbachev and the Reform Movement," Current History, Vol. 86 (October, 1987), 311.
[51] "Switch to Concrete Deeds," op. cit., p. 13.
[52] Lih, op. cit., p. 310.

Where exactly does educational reform fit into the scheme of perestroika? Has it assumed a lesser role now than when the new strategy of perestroika was announced and its basic principles formulated at the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee? Stated differently, has the latest educational reform, formally adopted in April 1984 as "The Fundamental Directions of General Education and Vocational School Reform Endorsed by the CPSU Central Committee Plenum on 10 April and by the USSR Supreme Soviet on 12 April (1984)"[53] [hereafter known as the "Fundamental Directions of General Education and Vocational School Reform"], become yet another casualty of the "continuity phenomenon," which negated educational reforms during the NEP and Khrushchev eras by reinstituting and continuing educational policies and practices operant prior to such reforms? Just as perestroika has been more platitude than practice up to January 1988, has the 1984 educational reform (Fundamental Directions...), adopted one year before the perestroika program, been more talk than fact? Will the pace of implementation of the 1984 educational reform be quickened now that perestroika is finally being effected following more than two years of planning and rhetoric? Should the 1984 educational reform be amended so as to conform more closely with goals and needs of perestroika, particularly since perestroika was not adopted until one year after such educational reform?

Before these critical questions can be addressed, salient aspects of the most current Soviet educational reform, which are encompassed in the 1984 "Fundamental Directions of General Education and Vocational School Reform," warrant review. Subsequent to the announcement of the new educational reform by the 1983 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist

53. "The Fundamental Directions of General Education and Vocational School Reform Endorsed by the CPSU Central Committee Plenum on 10 April and by the USSR Supreme Soviet on 12 April (1984)," Soviet Education (SE) 27, nos. 6-7 (April-May 1985): 158-191, trans. from Uchitel'skaia gazeta [Teacher's Newspaper] (UG) April 17, 1984.

Party, a draft of the reform was published in January 1984,[54] which had been prepared by a special commission set up within the Politburo under the chairmanship of Konstantin Chernenko. When Chernenko succeeded Andropov as General Secretary in February 1984, Mikhail Gorbachev became the new head of the education reform commission.[55] After three months of widespread public discussion of its draft, the commission presented in April 1984 its final version titled "The Fundamental Directions of General Education and Vocational School Reform," which was quickly adopted. Within a year, in March 1985, Gorbachev, who had worked diligently for the adoption and the empowerment through the USSR Ministry of Education of the reform,[56] acceded to the Party leadership.

The 1984 reform document addresses forty-one "fundamental directions" in Soviet education, but the most significant specific changes may be meaningfully summarized as follows:[57]

1) lengthening of compulsory schooling of the General-Educational Labor-Polytechnical School from 10 to 11 years (from a 3-5-2 to a 4-5-2 tripartite structure);

2) enrollment of 6 year-olds (instead of age 7) in the First Grade;

3) provide universal vocational education to all senior secondary-school-age youths in Grades 10 and 11 in the general education school, the vocational-technical training school, and the secondary specialized educational institutions through labor training programs (actual production practice/industrial experience) and stress polytechnical education (teaching scientific principles underlying industrial and agricultural production and application in the regular academic school) -- so as to master an occupation before starting to work;

54 "The CPSU Central Committee's Draft Basic Guidelines for Reform in the General Education and Vocational Schools," Pravda and Izvestiia (January 4, 1984), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 36, no. 1: 1-9, 14-15.

55 The line of succession as General Secretary of the Communist Party, following the death of Leonid Brezhnev (1964-1984) in November 1982 was as follows: I.V. Andropov, 11/82-2/84; K.M. Chernenko, 2/84-3/85; M.S. Gorbachev, 3/85-present.

56 Beatrice Beach Szekely, "The New Soviet Educational Reform," Comparative Education Review, XXX, no. 3 (August, 1986), 323.

57 "The Fundamental Directions of General Education and Vocational School Reform," op. cit., pp. 158-191.

4) new admissions regulations for higher educational institutions stressing equal access, including abolition of grade average on the secondary school leaving certificate for enrollment competition;

5) revision of the academic school curriculum -- lay out with utmost clarity the fundamental concepts and leading ideas in the academic disciplines, eliminate overloading of curricula and textbooks;

6) introduce computers into the educational process on a wide range -- specifically introduce the course "Principles of Information Science and Computer Technology" into all senior secondary schools (Grades 10 and 11);

7) improve the conditions for native language study along with the study of the Russian language, such that fluency in Russian should become the norm for secondary school graduates;

8) upgrade and intensify ideological and moral education, including a new set of "Rules for Pupils" and a reward system for diligence in school and at work;[58]

9) optimize instructional methods, including active efforts by teachers and parents to help students develop an independent way of thinking;

10) revise current textbooks and compile new ones;

11) improve the training, certification, material status of teachers and emphasize the use of incentives and rewards in upgrading their performance;

12) optimize the administration of public education and put the inspection and monitoring system for schools in order, paying special attention to the rural school;

13) step up notably the building of new schools.

The new 1984 Soviet educational reform is not so new anymore. It is now heading into the third year of its implementation stage, the third and final stage, which began about April 1986, following two years of mobilization stage efforts upon its official adoption in April 1984, concluding a year's drafting and refining stage. Implementation of the reform in its entirety is targeted for 1995, the last year of the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan (1991-1995). While this completion date appears a comfortable seven years away, "glasnost reporting" of the progress of educational reform in

[58] A new course to reinforce the increased attention on moral training is to be introduced. "The Ethics and Psychology of Family Life" will stress personal morality conducive to stable family life and encourage growth in the national birthrate.

the Soviet press and other media leaves little cause for optimism. Is predilection of the onset of the "continuity phenomenon," that traditional nemesis of Soviet educational reform, already justified?

At a late-August 1987 conference devoted to an assessment of efforts to implement the 1984 reform in education, Politburo member, Yegor Ligachev, previously identified as the No. 2 man in the Communist Party and leading voice of the Kremlin's conservatives, criticized the pace and extent of the reform. More specifically, he pointed to a number of "substantial shortcomings in the implementation of the reform," namely:[59]

1) the restructuring of work remains only a slogan for many general-educational and vocational schools;
2) "the main thing" -- there are no tangible results in improving the quality of instruction and upbringing of students;
3) questions pertaining to universal computer education are only slowly being resolved;
4) "liberalism" in assessing students' knowledge continues;
5) the remaking of textbooks and other study aids has been procrastinated, especially in the social sciences.
6) while the schools are in need of new ideas and methods of instruction, it is precisely such things that are lacking in the work of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, which urgently needs a thorough restructuring;
7) the professional training of teachers, some of whom display an indifferent attitude toward school life, remains at a lower level -- without confidence and faith in the teacher, there can be no learning or upbringing;
8) excessive regulation thwarts the schools, especially the school principals of general and vocational schools, who are given additional duties without the opportunity to discharge them adequately;
9) there is insufficient improvement in training the younger generation for productive labor -- and not enough base enterprises for production training have been assigned to schools.

While Ligachev acknowledged progress in annual appropriations ("the material base") for general-education and vocational-technical schools and

59 "Switch to Concrete Deeds," Pravda (August 27, 1987) and Izvestiia (August 28, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 34: 13-14.

preschools, higher wages for teachers and higher stipends for higher education students, and intensified competition for higher teacher-training schools, he stressed that "so far, true reform has not moved into the school, into the classroom ... [and] achieving such a move is now the most important thing!"[60] On a lighter note (musical, that is!), he questions the schools' indifference toward the craze for "primitive music" that has seized youngsters, as well as the number of so many "physically flabby youngsters" in Soviet schools[61] (the contrary assertion of the Director of the U.S. President's Program on Physical Fitness, George Allen, notwithstanding!).

By far, Ligachev's most damning and most significant criticism of the 1984 educational reform deals with the teaching-learning process that dominates Soviet schools, that is:

> The teacher's endeavor to stand over his pupils all the time, to monitor their every step, is the bane of our schools. From this standpoint, the situation in the schools is at variance with the process of the democratization of all life.[62]

Ligachev's solution?

> What is needed here are a serious alteration of relations between teacher and pupil, broad openness in the work of the schools, and the development of criticism and self-criticism.[63]

Ligachev here asserts the need to apply perestroika to the reform of the school, that is, to restructure the school through glasnost -- through the process of democratization of all life. The aim of perestroika is to encourage Soviet citizens to assume responsibility for their own actions, to become active citizens, and thereby overcome the passivity nurtured by the authoritarianism of Stalin's system. Since

60 Ibid., p. 14.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.

"democratization of society is the heart of restructuring," [64] according to Gorbachev himself in his address honoring the 70th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, then why shouldn't democratization be reflected in school reform? Ligachev's strong sentiments about the role and potential of the school are such that school reform should not only be carried out at priority rates, but also, should predetermine positive changes in other areas of public life.[65] The impression gained from Ligachev's speech is that Soviet education ought to be on the cutting edge of the reform efforts in Soviet society-at-large. At this point in time it is not. In order to do so, students must be entrusted with more independence, self-management, and seemingly more freedom unencumbered by the watchful eye of the teacher. Classrooms traditionally taught by rote and characterized by rigid conformity must change -- and change quickly if perestroika is to work.

As recently as mid-February 1988, Ligachev continues to propagate his concerns regarding the imperative that the rigid Soviet bureaucracy loosen its grip on the schools. In a two-hour speech to the plenum of the policy-making Central Committee, he called for an overhaul of secondary and higher education. He once again attached a premium to the importance of education by asserting that:

> The general educational and professional preparation of this generation, the world outlook and moral values it will acquire -- on this, to a large extent depend ... the future of the country and the fate of socialism itself. [66]

[64] M.S. Gorbachev, "October and Restructuring: The Revolution Continues," Pravda and Izvestiia (November 3, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 44: 9.

[65] "Switch to Concrete Deeds," op. cit., p. 13.

[66] "Soviet Urges Better Technological Training," Roanoke Times & World-News, February 18, 1988, p. A8.

Ligachev also spoke to the need for such fundamental changes as:

1) strengthening vocational education by orienting it to the demands of technology, but not pulling students out of regular classes too early to receive such training;

2) the need for more computers and computer teachers so as to be able to carry out the computer training mandated by the 1984 educational reform;

3) an ambitious program of school building -- new buildings for 28 million pupils to be built between 1990-2000 requiring a drastic increase in capital expenditures in education.[67]

Yevgeniy Velikhov, vice-president of the USSR Academy of Sciences, recently confirmed that one million computers are to be introduced into the Soviet school system by 1992.[68] During the present 12th Five-Year Plan (1986-1990), industries falling under the Ministry of Electronics Industries have begun series production of basic models of personal computers meeting contemporary world standards and will distribute a half-million of them to the schools for use in teaching the required course, "The Fundamentals of Information Science and Computers."[69] However, at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in late-February 1988, attended by a high-level delegation of fourteen Soviet scientists, the Soviets indicated that they are particularly in need of advice on mass-producing computers to implement Mr. Velikhov's ambitious school computers initiative.[70]

Even if the struggle to introduce computer training should eventually be won, is Gorbachev's program of perestroika through glasnost prepared to cope with the eventuality of a computerized society, where

[67] Ibid.

[68] Kim McDonald, "Science Summit: U.S., Soviet Researchers Trade Information on Major Programs," The Chronicle of Higher Education, December 16, 1987, p. A6.

[69] "Making Computer Technology a Part of Everyday Life," Pravda (October 24, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 43: 26.

[70] Kim McDonald, "Soviet Science Leaders at Meeting in U.S. Speak With Unusual Candor About Research Progress," The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 24, 1988, p. A8.

the free flow of information becomes a fact of life, and control by a top-heavy bureaucracy becomes difficult, if not impossible. What are the limits of democratization in the Soviet society purportedly holding the line on socialism versus a market economy, but vowing never to desert the political tenets of Leninism?

Soviet media are replete with explicit intimations that the 1984 "Fundamental Directions ... " educational reform thus far is viewed as a failure and that the "impostor" is the state bureaucratic collective comprising the USSR Ministry of Education,[71] the USSR State Committee for Vocational and Technical Education,[72] the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences,[73] as well as the USSR Academy of Sciences.[74]

[71] From Pravda and Izvestiia:

> The ministry does not play the role of genuine organizer of the school reform; it displays sluggishness and indecisiveness in overcoming current difficulties and shortcomings.

"Switch to Concrete Deeds," loc. cit.

[72] From Pravda and Izvestiia:

> The USSR State Committee for Vocational and Technical Education has [not] created an integral system of work with the teachers.

Ibid.

[73] From Pravda:

> The USSR Academy of Pedagogy long ago lost its role as a generator of new ideas. The average age of its full members is over 65 ... and to expect that they will get a second wind would be naive.

"According to the Old Schedule," Pravda (August 25, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 34: 12.

> We need to begin the reform with the administration, by eliminating the multilevel sluggish bureaucratic machine that has dominated teachers for many years, and by disbanding or totally reorganizing the Academy of Pedagogy.

"According to the Old Schedule -- continued discussion," Pravda (October 16, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 42: 24.

[74] From Literaturnaya gazeta:

> We will say bluntly that your [G.I. Marchuk's, President of the USSR Academy of Sciences] statement to the effect that the process of democratization in the Academy of Sciences should not go 'too far' leaves us at a loss. Has this process ever really begun? .... all we are seeing is a restructuring of the work of the administrative apparatus .... [we] the doctors and candidates of science ... are not allowed to take part in the management of the shop, as was the case in medieval craft guilds.

K.F. Shatsillo, et al, "Just What Is It That Is 'More Clearly Seen By the Boss'?," Literaturnaya gazeta (July 8, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 37: 11.

At the first meeting of the Politburo in 1987 even the reform of higher education was a major topic of discussion, which will result in the promulgation of final directives also. According to one high-ranking source, Boris Tamm, Rector of Tallinn Polytechnic Institute in Estonia, the reform will result in "major changes," such that higher education will be given "20% more freedom," and the changes will be "absolutely on a par with those in our economic and social life -- everything is geared to personal initiative."[75] Research too in Soviet higher education, especially that conducted in the major research arm of science and technology, the USSR Academy of Sciences, has come under fire from the Party Central Committee for "being out of touch with reality."[76] The Academy, traditionally immune from Party and government criticism, regarded the assessment as a warning that its research should be more closely aligned with the needs and requirements of society.[77]

Along with the rather dismal general assessment of the implementation of the 1984 educational reform, Soviet media in the pursuit of glasnost in the field of education appear to have stepped up their disdainful reporting of glaring realities and conditions afflicting Soviet schools. One such report involved a rural secondary school in which the inspector from the province department of public education, accompanied by the individual who later reported the incident, was observing a physics class. The teacher, herself a graduate of the school and also engaged in taking correspondence courses from a teacher training institute, explained to her students that "matter is everything that has form" and

[75] Patricia Walker, "U.S.S.R. to Start Ambitious Reform of Education System," The Chronicle of Higher Education, January 28, 1987, p. 1.

[76] "Soviet Central Committee Criticizes Science Agency," The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 2, 1987, p. 27.

[77] Ibid.

asked if this was clear to everyone. In response to a student's query, "Is glue matter?," the teacher upon reflection not so confidently replied, "Well, if it's in a bottle." The inspector was judged to have made a bad scene worse when she apparently shrugged off the incident and attempted to "console" the shaken reporting observer by comparing the physics teacher's poor performance in class with her highly regarded work at the labor and rest camp, while emphasizing that "she made a mistake -- who doesn't make mistakes sometimes?"[78]

The rather negative evaluation of the educational reform three years into its implementation stage by Soviet media is occasionally interrupted with a positive account of some innovative, creative, or different educational approach either undergoing discussion or experimentation. For example, the idea of a school operating on a private cooperative basis under the staffing of 4-10 teachers covering Grades 8-10 received the plaudits of the press for its incorporation of such unique concepts as: instruction according to the student's own individualized programs; an opportunity for pupils to explore a specialized career interest in depth; the combination of two electives, coinciding with the student's career interest, with the school's mandatory course of instruction; homework only as it relates to the student's interest or choice; rigorous entrance examinations in composition and mathematics to identify truly erudite students devoid of special treatment or use of connections; provision for the student's return to a regular school if unable to handle the program; tests in regular school subjects -- to be checked and graded by public education personnel; tuition-based private school -- 50 rubles/month, with the opportunity to perform socially

78 I. Ovchinnikova, "Are We Sowing Knowledge Among the People?," Izvestiia (September 18, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 39: 23.

useful labor for those whose parents cannot afford the tuition; an absence of school administrators; a school psychologist to assist students in adapting to competition; and the expectation that graduates will have the knowledge equivalent of 1-2 years of higher education.[79]

In the final analysis, while it cannot be stated that the 1984 educational reform, touted as the most significant and sweeping such reform since that of Khrushchev, has succumbed to the "continuity phenomenon" traced in this paper, signs of its implementation are meagre at best, and the prospects for improvement discouraging. It is Perhaps symptomatic of the difficulty is that the restructuring of the schools was planned and formalized almost a year before the radical restructuring of society, now popularly known as perestroika, was officially announced and only as of January 1988 begun to be effected. The reform of education and that of society-at-large in the Soviet Union appears disjointed, ill-coordinated, and perhaps even mutually exclusive. In the past considered to be a major instrument of the state in the building of communism and the molding of the "new Soviet man," the school's functioning as an agent of change for perestroika appears loosely defined at best and generally bypassed at worst. Glasnost questioning as to whether the "Basic Guidelines for Reform," drafted in January 1984 and adopted in April 1984 as "The Fundamental Directions of ... Reform", are "in keeping with the present day" or "is there really a need for a reform of the reform" by the head of vocational-technical education in the USSR[80] reveal a genuine concern shared

[79] G. Kreidlin, "We Want to Open a School on a Cooperative Basis," Literaturnaya gazeta (July 15, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 38: 20-21.

[80] A.P. Dumachev [Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Vocational and Technical Education], "The School Reform in Action: The Vocational-Technical School Changes Its Look," Izvestiia (September 22, 1987), trans. in Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP) 39, no. 38: 19.

by many. The distinction between training taking place in general-education schools (Eleven-Year Schools) and "true vocational training" in vocational-technical schools, the thesis of the reform about doubling the number of Eight-Year School graduates admitted to vocational-technical schools, and the consideration of a fundamental change in the structure of the entire system of education need to be addressed.[81] These areas represent only some of the major problems in education calling for immediate attention. Despite having headed the commission that finalized the 1984 reform and having led the efforts for its adoption in April 1984, General Secretary Gorbachev's seeming detachment from education-related controversy and lack of leadership in realizing the potential of education pose a serious threat to perestroika as a panacea for Soviet economic, technological, and social ills.

Conclusion

Gorbachev's program of perestroika through glasnost cannot succeed in the long run apart from the support of the Soviet system of education at all levels. Except for the October Revolution itself, three periods in Soviet history are interconnected in that they reflect attempts to adhere to the ideas and thinking of Lenin, especially his emphasis on democratization of economic life and Party functioning and on individual initiative: the New Economic Policy (1921-1927), the Khrushchev period of de-Stalinization (1956-1964), and Gorbachev's program of perestroika (1985-1988+). A degree of liberalism allowing for greater socio-educational change and reform is also a commonality shared by these three periods. Such educational change and reform in both the NEP and Khrushchev interludes, however, gave way to reactionary periods, which continued

[81] Ibid.

the traditional educational policies and practices existing prior to these periods. This paper focused on the probability of such continuity again spelling the failure of educational reform during the present-day program of perestroika undertaken at the behest of the charismatic Mikhail Gorbachev.

Research uncovered in the previous pages does not confirm another haunting reappearance of the "continuity phenomenon" that historically has plagued liberal educational reform in the Soviet Union -- at least yet. It is too early to state with certainty whether lightning will strike thrice, particularly since the actual implementation of perestroika is only a few months underway. It is apparent, however, that educational reform and perestroika, with its almost exclusive bias toward economic restructuring, are not mutually supportive or symbiotic in their present stage of development. A reactionary period wherein the 1984 educational reform would be abandoned and continuity with pre-1984 educational policies and practices established would be an admission of failure of the "spiritual dimension" [dukhovnost] of perestroika -- a reflection of the national mood which derives from the "personal perestroika" of each Soviet citizen, as urged by Gorbachev.

Soviet educational reform resulting from "The Fundamental Directions ..." of 1984 is not vulnerable to reaction culminating with the "continuity phenomenon" once again. Rather, it is at an impasse marked by notable inaction, inertia, and lack of direction from the top administrative echelons of education. It is neither leading nor following perestroika, and certainly not progressing on a united front with it. It simply exists -- seemingly outside the mainstream of perestroika, but paradoxically frequently targeted by the glasnost that feeds such restructuring.

The viability of the 1984 educational reform would seem to rest on an immediate reassessment of the causes of its present obvious sham. Cosmetic changes must be replaced by a comprehensive overhaul of public education. As observed in Pravda:

> ... only "first-echelon" measures began to be implemented: pay raises for teachers, a shift to 11 years of schooling, more hours devoted to instruction in labor skills, partial review of curricula and textbooks. The functional principles of the educational system were left untouched. The reform did not disturb the cumbersome, multilevel administrative structure ... and did not eliminate the administrative paperwork, red tape and formalism. Proposals to introduce different instructional approaches at an early age ... were rejected.[82]

The promotion of self-management and a democratic system of management in economic restructuring could be furthered by the employment of more creative instructional approaches in the schools requiring more independent, imaginative, and critical types of thinking. Such training in school could help prepare students for their eventual involvement with sweeping changes in the expectations of workers and managers. The democratization imputed to the success of perestroika cannot be divorced from practices in the educational process. Freedom for creativity in all settings -- economic, educational, scientific, and social -- must be risked to insure the success of restructuring even at the lesser risk of undermining the control of the Party and the state. If Gorbachev's perception of the process of modernization truly centers not on material resources but on human elements, their attitude and sense of commitment, then his perestroika program must include all sectors of society, not just the economy, and conditions must be made conducive to creativity and encouraging

[82] "According to the Old Schedule," loc. cit.

[83] Seweryn Bialer, "Marx Had It Wrong. Does Gorbachev?," U.S. News & World Report, October 19, 1987, p. 42.

of natural and voluntary, not forced, involvement by the Soviet people.

Mikhail Gorbachev's penchant for risk-taking on numerous fronts prompts many Soviet-watchers to compare him with Nikita Khrushchev. While the parallels do exist, Khrushchev's involvement with the educational establishment seemed less remote. Gorbachev's alleged chief ideological opponent, Yegor Ligachev, appears to be closer to the educational front and more concerned about its present plight than the General Secretary himself. This particular stance of Gorbachev perhaps looms as his biggest risk yet, since perestroika's success cannot be secured apart from thorough educational reform. Gorbachev's reluctance to become more involved here is paradoxical not only because of his leadership of the educational reform commission in 1984, but also, because, unlike Khrushchev, he voluntarily courts the intelligentsia and recognizes the need for more individualism. Both distinctions favor considerable educational reform to secure the triumph of perestroika. He can still hurdle present obstacles to repulse the danger of the "continuity phenomenon," but he must act without further delay.